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Written on AUGUST 30, 2012 AT 7:42 AM by JWICK

# Immunizations Awareness Month: Naval Hospital Beaufort

Filed under FAMILIES, FLEET AND THE FLEET MARINE FORCE, FORCE HEALTH AND SAFETY (NO COMMENTS)

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BEAUFORT, S.C. (Aug. 03, 2012) Ms. Luvelle Taylor, licensed practical nurse, prepares a young patient for his vaccinations at the Naval Hospital Beaufort Immunizations Clinic. This is busy time of year for the clinic as parents bring their children into make sure their vaccines are up to date for the new school year. (U.S. Navy photo by Regena Kowitz/Released)

With August being Immunizations Awareness Month, I thought it would be a good time to highlight the many achievements not only of modern medicine, but also of Navy Medicine and specifically Naval Hospital Beaufort in fighting infectious disease.

The U.S. military has long been a leader in the prevention of infectious diseases for the purpose of Force Health Protection. A modern success is the adenovirus vaccine, which has proven that a well crafted vaccine given to a targeted, susceptible population can have an enormous impact on their overall health. The intervention of Naval Hospital Beaufort’s Public Health Directorate for U.S. Marine Corps recruits attending initial training

as Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) Parris Island is a perfect example.

Disease surveillance performed by hospital medical staff serving at MCRD had documented that adenovirus, specifically types 4 and 14, had caused between 60-90 percent of the febrile respiratory illness (FRI) in recruits, resulting in lost training days and frequent admissions to the hospital. Many recruits were delayed or even prevented from becoming Marines because of this virus.

After more than 10 years of research and development, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) licensed a live, oral adenovirus vaccine against type 4 and type 7 on March 16, 2011. This vaccine reached MCRD in October of 2011 and administration by Navy Medical personnel during recruit processing was initiated. Almost immediately, significant reduction in recruit sick call visits and hospital admissions was observed.

After eight months of vaccine administration, there was a 75 percent reduction in recruit febrile respiratory illness and a significant decrease in recruits being delayed or dropped from training due to respiratory illness.

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Another area in which the U.S. Navy has been very successful in preventing infectious disease is leveraging the full benefit of the seasonal influenza vaccine, and Naval Hospital Beaufort has already gotten a jump start in vaccinating all staff members and military personnel in the Tri-Command area. All active duty personnel are mandated to receive the vaccine annually unless there is a medical contraindication. Protecting our active duty Sailors and Marines not only keeps them healthy to perform their mission, but also prevents our highly mobile global force from being vectors of the disease as they travel around the world.

Naval Hospital Beaufort received their first doses of the 2012-2013 influenza vaccine the end of the second week of August and by the third week in August had already administered the vaccine to a deploying Marine Air Wing and vaccinated the vast majority of their active duty and civilian health care workers. By the third week in August, when a large enough shipment had arrived, incoming Marine Corps recruits were being vaccinated during their in-processing. Swift vaccination not only protects individuals as soon as possible, but is also a yearly drill to assure the processes are in place to quickly vaccinate your population from a looming influenza pandemic, such as was seen with the 2009 H1N1 novel influenza.

This August, as we recognize the importance of immunizations, one of modern medicine’s most significant achievements, it’s also important to reflect on how far we’ve come. In the United States, vaccines have reduced or eliminated many infectious diseases that once routinely killed or harmed thousands of people a year, particularly infants and young children. The time of iron lungs and braces designed for children paralyzed by polio and the devastating birth defects caused by rubella are relics of the past in the United States.



**National Immunization Awareness Month** was set in August to promote back to school immunizations, remind college students to catch up immunizations before they move into dormitories, and remind everyone that the influenza season is only a few months away.

Protect yourself, protect your children, and protect your neighbors: Get immunized!

For more information on what vaccines are recommended for you and your family, visit the CDC’s website for vaccines schedules by clicking [here](#).

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